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U.S. Ambassador Honors Nurses at Oshaango Clinic

U.S. Ambassador Thomas Daughton visited Oshaango Clinic near Eenhana Wednesday, August 12, 2015 to honor the hard work of the three nurses working to cover an area with 7,000 Namibians. The clinic currently caters for 774 patients on anti-retroviral medication to treat HIV. The U.S. government supports the efforts of Oshaango Clinic through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR).

On a tour of the clinic, Ambassador Daughton highlighted the importance of its services. Previously patients traveled distances as far as 50 kilometers for medical assistance. Such long distances could be a deterrent for patients to seek treatment.

"We are in a race against HIV with the ultimate goal of achieving an HIV-free generation in Namibia. In order to win this race, we need to locate people infected with HIV and treat more than 90% of them - like here at Oshaango, which is a resounding success," said Daughton.

As a sign of appreciation to the clinic staff, which consists of three nurses with one doctor who visits monthly, U.S. Ambassador Daughton presented a plaque to Head Nurse Fenni Nguti.

Ohangwena Regional Director John Hango thanked the American people for their continued support of the country's health sector. Over the 10 years, the United States government, through PEPFAR, has provided approximately N\$10 billion (US\$1 billion) to Namibia.

Hango joined the U.S. Ambassador in his praise for the nurses and emphasized that, "HIV is no longer a death sentence. There is adequate medical help available – right here in this clinic."

HIV-positive Martha Johannes shared her experiences with the more than 140 people in attendance at the event. "People discriminated against me and called me dead already, even my own family members," said Martha. "But thanks to the anti-retroviral treatment at Oshaango Clinic, I can now live a normal life, and for many years to come," she added.

Martha cautioned patients against the often misleading advice of friends and relatives who may not believe in anti-retroviral treatment, "Don't listen to them! These medications are beneficial. I am a free person today because I take my medication. Never discontinue your ARV!"

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